

have actually only started the amendment process 2 weeks ago—just 2 weeks ago on the amendment process.

We have had 21 amendments and motions—less than 2 a day.

So let's look at how the Senate has dealt with previous legislation, arguably of lesser consequence than this one.

No Child Left Behind in 2001: 21 session days over 7 weeks, 44 rollcall votes, 157 amendments offered.

The 9/11 Commission/Homeland Security Act in 2002: 19 session days over 7 weeks, 20 rollcall votes, 30 amendments offered.

The Energy bill in 2002: 21 session days over 8 weeks, 36 rollcall votes, 158 amendments offered.

Now, Madam President, this is not an energy bill. This is an attempt by the majority to take over one-sixth of the U.S. economy—to vastly expand the reach and role of government into the health care decisions of every single American—and they want it to be done after one substantive amendment—one large, substantive amendment. This is absolutely inexcusable.

I think Senator SNOWE put it best on Tuesday. This is what she had to say Tuesday of this week. "Given the enormity and complexity," Senator SNOWE said, "I don't see anything magical about the Christmas deadline if this bill is going to become law in 2014."

And I think Senator SNOWE's comments on a lack of bipartisanship at the outset of this debate are also right on point. Here is what Senator SNOWE said in November of this year—late November:

I am truly disappointed we are commencing our historic debate on one of the most significant and pressing domestic issues of our time with a process that has forestalled our ability to arrive at broader agreement on some of the most crucial elements of health care reform. The bottom line is, the most consequential health care legislation in the history of our country and the reordering of \$33 trillion in health care spending over the coming decade shouldn't be determined by one vote-margin strategies—surely—

Surely—

we can and must do better.

Well, Senator SNOWE is entirely correct.

The only conceivable justification for rushing this bill is the overwhelming—overwhelming—opposition of the American people. Democrats know the longer Americans see this bill, the less they like it.

Here is the latest from Pew; it came out just yesterday. A majority—58 percent—of those who have heard a lot about the bill oppose it, while only 32 percent favor it.

There is no justification for this blind rush, except a political one, and that is not good enough for the American people, and that is not justification for forcing the Senate to vote on a bill that none of us have seen.

Americans already oppose the bill. The process is just as bad. It is completely reckless and completely irresponsible.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message with respect to H.R. 3326, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 3326, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate with amendment No. 3248 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to refer the amendment of the House to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 3249, to provide for a study.

Reid amendment No. 3252 (to Reid amendment No. 3248), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3250 (to amendment No. 3249), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 3251 (to amendment No. 3250), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, Senators are permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the first hour equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half.

The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Tennessee lead a colloquy including the Senator from Oklahoma, the Senator from Wyoming, myself, and the Senator from Kentucky.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Arizona.

I was thinking as I listened to the Republican leader, I wonder if the Senator noticed the comments of the Governor of California on Monday. Governor Schwarzenegger said on "Good Morning America" that he supports the idea of overhauling health care, but: "the last thing we need," said Governor Schwarzenegger, "is another \$3 billion in spending when we already have a \$20 million deficit."

He was referring to one of the unintended consequences of this bill, which is big State costs for Medicaid being shifted to the States—unfunded mandates.

So here is Governor Schwarzenegger's advice, following up on the comments of the leader: "So I would say be very careful to the Federal Government."

This is from the Governor of California:

Before you go to bed with all this, let's rethink it. There is no rush from one second to the next. Let's take another week or two. Let's come up with the right package.

I wonder if the Senator saw it.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Tennessee who also understands this issue as well as or better than anyone, having been a Governor and recognizing the problems the Governors face.

If I could step back a second, Governor Schwarzenegger is a very astute observer of the political scene in California. May I point out to my colleagues, in this morning's Wall Street Journal: "Democrats' Blues Grow Deeper in New Poll," and then: "Support for Health Overhaul Wanes."

There is some remarkable information concerning the mood and views of the American people, following on a Washington Post ABC News poll out yesterday that says 51 percent of Americans say they oppose the proposed changes to the system; 44 percent approve.

Thanks to the efforts of so many people, including our leadership, we have turned American public opinion because we have been informing them of the consequences of passage of this legislation.

Let me quote from the Wall Street Journal article:

More Americans now believe it is better to keep the current health system than to pass President Barack Obama's plan, according to a new Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll. Findings mark a shift from the fall when the overhaul enjoyed the edge over the status quo. According to the poll, 44 percent of Americans said it is better to pass no plan at all compared with 41 percent who said it is better to pass the plan.

What they are saying is: Don't do this government takeover; don't increase taxes; don't increase spending; don't increase the costs. It is a remarkable shift, thanks to informing the American people.

Could I mention a couple of other points made in this poll in the Wall Street Journal. In September, 45 percent of Americans said they wanted the plan passed; 39 percent wanted to "keep the current system." In December, in polling out today, only 41 percent of the American people want it passed, and 44 percent say keep the current system.

Then, of course, we have another interesting statistic:

Trust that the government will do what is right: 21 percent say always or most of the time; 46 percent say only some of the time; and 32 percent of the American people say almost never.

Of course, the anger and disapproval of this health care plan right now is the centerpiece of Americans' dissatisfaction of the way we do business.